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A

MODEST ENQUIRY,

HOW FAR THE

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES of the CHURCH of
ENGLAND, and the CREED ascribed to
St. ATHANASIUS, are consistent with, and
supported by each other: And how far they
are also consistent with the Declarations of
JESUS CHRIST, and the Doctrine of his
APOSTLES.

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MODERATE ENQUIRY

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England, and
St. Augustine's
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are also consistent with the Declarations of
JESUS CHRIST, and the Doctrine of his
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(From One of the

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CHRIST, and the Doctrine of his Apostles.

By *ANTHONY FOTHERGILL*, *K*

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And AUTHOR of

Free Thoughts on the Doctrines and Duties of RELIGION in general,
and of CHRISTIANITY in particular, compared and contrasted with
the *Faith* and *Practice* of CHRISTIANS of all Denominations.

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MODERN ENGLISH

How and Why

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

Model English CHURCH OF ENGLAND



Modest Enquiry, &c.

ARTICLES of religion framed, accepted, and established by a *national church*, and supported by the power of the *civil magistrate*, strike upon the minds of the members of such church an awful idea of its *wisdom* and *authority*; and, under *absolute monarchies*, generally introduce *unlimited tyranny* on one hand, and *flavish submission* and *stupid ignorance* on the other: and the principal reason why many of the inferior clergy of the church of England are still fond of introducing a *despotic civil government*, seems to be, that a *dissent* from *established doctrines* may become liable to a *double prosecution*, the one from the *state*, and the other from the discipline of the *church*; this having been always the case in the reigns of those kings who endeavoured to make themselves *absolute*. Instances of this persecuting spirit abounded in the reigns of *Charles the first*

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and *Charles the second*; and during the latter part of the reign of queen *Anne*, the *usurping* clergy, with *Sacheverel* at their head, grew very insolent, in hopes of a second revolution, or, as they modestly called it, a *restoration*; the success of which would have left us no other *religion* but *papery*, no other *liberty* but *slavery*, nor any other *property*, but what was consistent with the *capricious humour*, the real or imaginary wants of the reigning prince. Such are the effects of the principles of *toryism*! from which we are happily delivered under the mild and auspicious government of the HOUSE OF HANOVER. Every man has now an acknowledged right to *judge for himself* in matters which concern his everlasting happiness, and is not obliged to receive the unscriptural doctrines of an *ignorant* or *bigotted priesthood*; he may read his BIBLE in the mother tongue, and expound it according to *sense* and *reason*, and not according to the gross perversions which have been formerly obtruded by an usurping pope and a temporizing clergy. Every subject of king GEORGE, who does not disturb the state, "may sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree," without the fear of a *Bonner*, a *Gardiner*, a *Laud*, a *Manwaring*, a *Sybtorp*, a *Sacheverel*, and a *Gibson*, to ensnare his life, alienate his property, and usurp the sacred rights of conscience. The *dignified clergy*
are

are now become as warm in the *protection* of the subjects rights, as their predecessors were furious in the invasion and destruction of them; so much is the face of government altered in this nation. O happy nation! ruled by a prince, who has no interest *distinct* from that of his *people*; who would even remit the *prerogatives* of the crown, for the advantage of his subjects; and who, *upon principle*, renounces all claim of jurisdiction over the *consciences of men*, and thinks they have a natural right to worship GOD in the manner most conformable to the dictates of their own understandings.

The creed of St. *Athanasius*, in its original, very nearly resembles the *Mahometan's* interrogation of the sepulchre, *Athanasius* having formed it some hundred years after his death. He was bishop of Alexandria, about the year of our Lord 348; and being famed for piety and learning, the *monks* and other *popish ecclesiastics*, in conformity to that fundamental principle of their church, "that there is no *religion*, where there is no *mystery*;" might easily suppose, that the very name of St. *Athanasius* would be sufficient to *sanctify* nonsense, and give *credit* to contradictions. Indeed, it is not much to be wondered at, that the *Athanasian system* should be readily embraced by the members of a church, in which *foppish*

superstition is accounted serious religion; furious zeal profound knowledge, and stupid ignorance the mother of devotion; *having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of GOD, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*: but, surely, PROTESTANTS *have not so learned CHRIST*. Eph. iv. 18, 20. They pretend to own JESUS CHRIST alone as the *supreme head* of the christian church; they read and preach his gospel, which he has left upon record, as a *complete rule* of faith and practice to his disciples and followers; and, consequently, ought carefully to observe that *pathetical caution*, Col. ii. 8. *Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after CHRIST*. It highly becomes PROTESTANTS, who have rejected the gross errors of the Romanists, and dissented from their church, to purge out the old leaven, and adhere strictly to the purity of the gospel; and not suffer it to be mixed and interwoven with creeds and confessions of human composition; but, like the noble BEREANS, *to search the scriptures whether these things were so*: for even sacred truth itself cannot convince a rational mind, till the mind discovers that it is truth. We might have been *papists* still, upon the ground of *implicit faith*; and how far that enemy

enemy to truth continues still to keep footing amongst vast numbers of PROTESTANTS, who profess no other faith but that which is prescribed by the church, is sad and melancholy to consider : which leads me to enquire, as I proposed, “ how “ *far the articles of the church of England,* “ *and the creed ascribed to St. Athanasius,* “ *are consistent with, and supported by* “ *each other ?* ”

In the SIXTH ARTICLE, it is said ; “ Holy “ *scripture containeth all things necessary to* “ *salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read* “ *therein, nor may be proved thereby, is* “ *not to be required of any man, that it should* “ *be believed as an article of faith, or be* “ *thought requisite or necessary to salvation.* ”

And the EIGHTH ARTICLE runs thus ; “ The three creeds, NICE creed, ATHA- “ *NASIUS* creed, and that which is com- “ *monly called the APOSTLES* creed, ought “ *thoroughly to be received and believed ; for* “ *they may be proved by most certain war-* “ *rants of holy scripture.* ”

That the first reformers were sincerely religious and holy men, and that they were great and shining lights in the age in which they lived, is not to be questioned ; but that they pretended to a spirit of INFALLI-

BILITY; their *dissent* from the church of Rome is a sufficient negation.

And if they, and all the protestant clergy since their time, acknowledged themselves *fallible*, and yet required, under penal sanctions, subscriptions to articles of human invention, in which there is no pretence to infallibility, the POPE himself has evidently the advantage of Protestants: for the POPE requires submission to his decrees upon no other foundation but his *infallibility* only; but they, upon a *professed fallibility*. It is, surely, very absurd and contradictory for a number of men to say, "It is true, we are fallible as well as yourselves; but notwithstanding our fallibility, we require you to believe just as we do." But as it is impossible, without light and evidence, to compel a rational mind to believe or disbelieve; it may be easily guessed, how much the *imposing power* has *obstructed* the progress of *knowledge* and *religion*.

Where *creeds* and *confessions*, that are either not sufficiently supported by scripture, or are contradictory to it, have been made the standards of an orthodox faith, by an ignorant or designing priesthood; the people who hood-wink their own eyes, instead of opening them to be enlightened by the rays
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of gospel truth, involve themselves in wilful ignorance ; and, whether priest or people, must fall under those judgments which GOD has denounced against this sin : Hosea iv. 6. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge : because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me.* Luke 11. 52. *Wo unto you lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge : ye entered not in yourselves ; and them that were entering in, ye hindered.* Ignorance and zeal are generally firmly united ; but zeal, without knowledge, has, in all ages, been the bane and destruction of religion.

In the SIXTH ARTICLE of the church of England, above recited, it is said ; “ Whatsoever is not read in the holy scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith : ” and the apostle PAUL confirms this doctrine in his epistle to the Romans xiv. 5. *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* The article and the apostle, are here exactly agreed ; “ that the faith of a CHRISTIAN, does not at all depend upon the faith of the church, but merely upon the conviction of his own mind.”

THE EIGHTH ARTICLE asserts, "that
 "the *three creeds* of *Nice*, the *Apostles*, and
 "that called *Athanasius' creed*, ought to be
 "thoroughly received and believed;" and
 gives this as the *reason* of receiving and be-
 lieving them, "that they may be proved by
 "most certain warrants of *Scripture*."

It is much more owing to the policy,
 than to the veracity of our ecclesiastics, that
 the common people are persuaded to be-
 lieve, that the APOSTLES were the com-
 pilers of that creed, which goes under their
 name. It is boldly asserted, that the Apo-
 stles, after having received the holy ghost,
 and before they left Jerusalem, met toge-
 ther; and, in order to preserve the unity of
 that doctrine they were to preach to man-
 kind, agreed upon a certain *symbol of faith*,
 before they separated to the several parts
 of the globe to which the spirit of GOD
 should send them; which was to be a per-
 petual rule of faith and doctrine, both to
 themselves and those whom they were to
 teach. But had this fact been true, either
 St. LUKE must have been ignorant of it,
 which cannot be supposed; or we must
 conclude he was a very bad historian, to
 omit, in a *summary of the acts of the holy*
 APOSTLES, an event of such vast impor-
 tance.

tance. It is also not supposeable, that the antient fathers, who assembled frequently in synods and councils, whenever any differences arose amongst them, would have omitted referring to this creed, as the basis and standard of their canons and decrees, if any such creed had been then extant; and besides, it was near four hundred years after the death of CHRIST, before this creed was ever heard of; all which makes it more than probable, that the Apostles were not the composers of it.

But further, if this *creed* was really framed by the Apostles themselves for their own and their successors use, then, not only all christians would have agreed in the articles of it, but there would have been no occasion to frame any other creed; as all new creeds must have been *non-apostolical*, and *of no original authority*; whereas the church, in her SIXTH ARTICLE, enjoins the use of the Nicene creed also as of equal authority with the Apostles' creed; and it is reasonable to think, either that the three hundred and eighteen holy fathers and bishops, who, to make a creed, assembled at *Nice*, from all parts of the christian world, looked upon the Apostles' creed as *deficient* or *erroneous*; or that there was no such creed in being; or that those holy penmen were not believed to be the authors of it.

But

But the true state of the case is, that when ever a doctrine was espoused by any man, or body of men, which the bishops, or leading men in the church, looked upon to be a *dangerous innovation, erroneous or heretical*; it was common for them to assemble, and add a *new article* to this creed, in direct opposition to such *dangerous and heretical* opinions.

Indeed, it has been the constant practice of the doctors of the church, to give pompous titles to canons and decrees, in order to impress the minds of the people with a higher notion of their authority; of this sort, as well as the creed of the Apostles, is that creed also which is dignified with the name of St. *Athanasius*. I shall, therefore, now enter upon an honest disquisition, how far this *creed* ascribed to St. Athanasius is consonant to the *articles of the church of England* above recited; and also how far, with respect to the *principal subject* of it, the doctrine of a TRINITY, it is consistent with the plain declarations of the New Testament.

It ought not to be denied, that creeds and confessions of faith, are so far useful, as they give such a comprehensive view of scripture doctrines, as a weak mind cannot
so

so easily collect for itself: but still, recourse must be had to the *law* and to the *testimony*, as the test of the orthodoxy of such creeds, before they can be received as a system of scripture truths; every man being required, as well by the *article of the church*, as by the *canon of scripture*, to be *fully persuaded in his own mind*, before he receives any doctrine as an article of his faith. Believing *as the church believes*, is therefore *no faith at all*, either in the sense of the sixth article of the church or of St. PAUL; but only *popery in the abstract*, propagated with a view to keep men in ignorance. And indeed if we consider the ambiguous and unintelligible terms, which the great doctors of the church have made use of to explain their notions of the Trinity; we shall be as much at a loss to fix ideas to them, as the writers themselves were who have made use of them. In what respect wiser are the unlearned, who are the bulk of the people, by the terms, *predicamental substance*, and *metaphysical entity*; *numerical*, *generic*, and *specific identity*; and a vast number of other terms, equally unintelligible?

One great design of the scriptures, is, to instruct mankind, what they are to believe concerning GOD: and whether the *learned expositors of scripture*, or the *Athanasian creed-makers*,

makers, or the late furious disputants about the doctrine of the Trinity, have not all rather obstructed than promoted that great design, let their works themselves be a lasting testimony.

That there is a first cause, which we call **GOD**, the light of nature sufficiently demonstrates ; and that there is but one **GOD**, to whom *supreme* worship is to be directed, may, I think, be fully demonstrated, both from reason and revelation : for if there are more **GODS** than one, they must be *different* in degrees of *perfection*, either *accidentally* or *essentially*. Now a *self-existent Being* admits of no *accidents*, as he must necessarily be possessed of *infinite perfection* ; and it is impossible that there can be any thing *accidental* to such a Being, accidents being peculiar to Beings of limited powers only : and if they differ *essentially*, the one must have some degree of being or perfection which the other wants ; but any deficiency, or degree of imperfection, found in the one, that is not to be found in the other, must necessarily involve in it an idea of the superiority of one to the other ; and prove, that they are not both *equally* and absolutely *perfect* ; and, consequently, that there is but **ONE self-existent, and absolutely perfect BEING.**

But

But as reasoning does not convey equally forcible conviction to every mind, it may be proper to enforce this argument by the declarations which JESUS CHRIST has made of himself, and by the doctrine of his Apostles concerning him.

But in this enquiry, I would by no means be understood, in the least to detract from the *honour* of the GLORIOUS REDEEMER; whose tender and compassionate regards for mankind, justly intitle him to the highest returns of love and gratitude; and to such exalted degrees of praise and glory as we are capable of ascribing consistently with that *supreme* degree of love and honour, fear and duty, which we owe to GOD the FATHER, and which he has reserved *solely* to himself; having declared, that he is jealous of his honour, and will not give his glory to another.

Those gentlemen who condemn reason, and all arguments founded upon it, which tend to prove any thesis in divinity, and refer to revelation only; will not, surely, be displeased to have the *doctrine of the TRI-NITY* examined with and compared by revelation: and I shall produce a few texts both from the Old and New Testament, in
order

order to set this doctrine in a clear light ; first, because what is revealed in scripture, is revealed for our *contemplation* ; and secondly, because it is absolutely necessary that every worshiper should be fully *satisfied* in the proper object of his worship ; for if he pays that worship which is due to the SUPREME BEING, to any other, he may be as guilty of *idolatry* as the papists themselves, or even as the most barbarous nations.

That the SUPREME GOD is a Being of *absolute perfection*, is not to be doubted ; scripture and reason are firmly united in support of the truth of this fundamental article of all religion : and whatever Being is not possessed of *absolute perfection*, cannot be this SUPREME GOD, nor ought to be worshiped as such. And as we ascribe no *personal properties* to the DEITY, but such as are properties of *perfection* only, we ascribe it to GOD the FATHER as a property of *perfection* that he is *unbegotten* ; and we say, what is consistent both with reason and scripture, when we say, that this property is *peculiar* to the FATHER ; and, consequently, that the SON and SPIRIT, being neither of them possessed of this *property*, are *destitute* of this *perfection*.

Again,

Again, If the SON is the SUPREME GOD, it is ascribed to him as a *peculiar* property of perfection, that he is *begotten*; of which property, GOD the FATHER is destitute. Now, as being *begotten* and *unbegotten*, are not only *distinct*, but directly *opposite* principles; then, the FATHER and the SON, are possessed of directly *opposite* principles of *perfection*.

Again, it is said, that the HOLY GHOST *proceeds* from the FATHER and the SON; and if he is the SUPREME GOD, this must be ascribed to him as a *peculiar* property of perfection, of which, both the FATHER and the SON are *destitute*. So that every one of the three persons have *one* property of *perfection* ascribed to him, as his *peculiar* and *distinguishing* property of *perfection*, which the other two want.

Now in order to discover more clearly the force of this argument, and to understand the declarations of the Old and New Testament, it will be necessary to consider what we mean by the word PERSON in the Trinity. That the three persons are three *distinct* MINDS, and consequently three *distinct* PERSONS, appears evident from this; that every one of the three persons has a
self-

self-consciousness of his own, distinct from the other: the FATHER has a consciousness, whereby he knows himself to be the FATHER, and not the SON; and the SON, in like manner, has a self-consciousness that he is the SON; and neither the FATHER nor the HOLY GHOST, &c. And it is altogether inconceivable, that if they are not three *distinct* persons, how there can be any TRINITY at all; for otherwise, they would be only a Trinity of *names, modes and relations*, in one single *essence*, which would not convey to us, any idea of a Trinity of *distinct persons*; and, consequently, the assertion of the Athanasian creed, that "there are three persons in the Trinity," would not hold good.

Indeed, if we consider the tenour of that creed, though every one, according to its severe determination, must either *believe it faithfully*, or *be cannot be saved*, we shall find in it some things hard to understand: but as creeds are, or ought to be, the fundamentals of religion, it might be expected that the creed-makers would suit them to the conceptions of vulgar capacities, that every man might discover their consistency with scripture revelation; for till the creed is found to be supported by the word of God, contained in the BIBLE, the *sixth article*

article declares, " It is not to be required
 " of any man, that it should be believed
 " as an article of the faith": observe the
 emphasis, *It is not to be required of any man*;
 that is, he is not bound to believe because
 the church believes, but he must have a
full conviction in his own mind, before it is
 required of him to believe at all.

The creed says, that " we are to worship
 " *one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity*;
 " neither confounding the *persons*, nor di-
 " viding the *substance*: for there is *one per-*
 " *son* of the FATHER, *another* of the SON,
 " and *another* of the HOLY GHOST".

Now if I have given a true definition of the
 word PERSON, (p. 15) I own, I cannot discover
 how we can avoid *confounding* the persons,
 without *dividing* the substance: for it is to
 me utterly inconceivable how three *distinct*
persons, distinguished from each other by a
self-consciousness, should only have one and
 the same *indivisible substance* amongst them
 all: and as far as I am able to judge, if
 they are all *one substance*, it will admit of
 some difficulty to make it plainly appear,
 that they are *three distinct persons*.

Again, If God the Father is stiled FA-
 THER, as standing in that relation to the
 C SON,

SON, it is difficult to conceive how they are both *equally* eternal, and that among the three persons none is *afore* or *after* another.

Again, the *procession* of the HOLY GHOST, which is by this creed assigned as his *distinguishing property*, might also be ascribed to the SON, if we can believe what our Saviour himself says, John VIII. 42. *I proceeded forth and came from GOD*; so that it may be said, as well of the SON, as of the HOLY GHOST, that he *proceeds*: the words which follow in the same verse, seem to make some *distinction* between the majesty and glory of the FATHER, compared with the SON; as there must be some kind of *superiority* in him that *sends*, over him that is *sent*; though the Athanasian *creed-makers* have asserted, "their glory *equal*, "their majesty *co-eternal*".

Again, I would ask those who deny any worship to the Redeemer, whether gratitude is worship? that it is, when offered up to God the Father for benefits received, I make no doubt: and as the sincerest gratitude is due to our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, for the inestimable advantages which God the Father was pleased, *in and through him*, to confer upon a sinful world; the next question is, whether gratitude to the Redeemer

deemer is worship? which I shall leave to be disputed by the learned, whose province it is.

These arguments appear to me reasonable; but as reason is, by numbers of serious Christians, looked upon as a faculty of little or no use in religion, I beg leave to say something in her vindication.

Understanding and reason are so nearly connected, that the one cannot be separated from the other, but both are rendered useless; or rather, if they are separated, they are both destroyed. Reason is the light of the universe, the very choicest blessing which God has bestowed upon mankind; for no other benefit, however great, could be either discovered or acknowledged, without reason. Even reason itself *presupposes* the powers of reasoning; for, otherwise, it might as well be bestowed to a horse, as to a man: to what purpose should the preacher explain his doctrine, or how could the hearer discover the truth of his doctrine, without the use and assistance of reason?

How surprizing is it then, that some *pretended* teachers give us as frightful ideas of reason, as they would do of the Devil himself!

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How surprizing is it then, that some *pretended* teachers give us as frightful ideas of reason, as they would do of the Devil himself!

they load it with the worst epithets they can invent, calling it *blind reason, corrupt reason, delusive reason, vitiated reason*; and assure us it is best to renounce it; to make a sacrifice of our understandings, and to shut our eyes lest we should miss our way. And if this doctrine is to direct our faith to its proper object, and guide us in the true and only way to heaven---I own Christianity is a *mystery* above my comprehension. To understand the scriptures is the end of reading them; without this, they are of no more effect than the doctor's medicine, which stands in his patient's window *unopened*, and is to perform the cure by *sympathy*. But this understanding is *only* to be gained by the *use* of our *rational powers*; for that we should understand gospel truths *without reason and understanding*, is impossible to conceive.

But, on the other hand, it is plain and evident, that the *neglect and disregard* of reason, has ever been the source of all *corruptions* in religion; for as soon as a man is prevailed upon to resign his reason and understanding, he lays himself open to be imposed upon by every delusion that a subtil or ignorant *priest-hood* may think fit to infuse. The *Romish* christians could never have been so wretchedly depraved, if they had

had not tamely resigned their reason and understanding to the authority and infallibility of their *popes*; and the *protestant* christian would be a much more consistent creature, if he would use his own understanding and reason, and not *implicitly* receive his principles by the direction of the *priest*. But it has been owing to the pride, authority, and ambition of the *Levitical tribe* all along, that we have submitted ourselves to their determinations in *matters of faith*; for they have generally found means to interest themselves in the state, and by that means to impose upon the people *creeds and confessions of their own making*, under *penal sanctions*: but if men were allowed to see with their own eyes the designs of *priestcraft* to lead them astray would have little or no effect. This the *Roman* priesthood are fully sensible of; and therefore they persuade their people to *renounce* reason and understanding, in order to make room for faith: and to speak the truth, we need not go so far as *Rome* for instances of this unchristian disposition, for we find it both in the *established* and *dissenting* priesthood at home. Those dark and disputable parts of the *creeds* of the one, and of the *confessions* of the other, ought, according to the *sixth article* of the establishment, to be examined by and compared with

scripture; and are not to be received, much less imposed, as articles of the christian faith, if they cannot be proved by scripture, in the judgment of every man to whom they are proposed as a rule of faith.

Here we are upon firm ground of judging for ourselves, if we may depend either upon the exprefs words of an *established article*, which says, *whatsoever may not be proved by the scripture, is not to be required of any man*; or upon the determination of an Apostle, who says, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*. So that Dissenters, who claim a right to judge for themselves, have an answer ready at hand, that is sufficient to silence all accusers. The very church from which they dissent, asserts, in one of her fundamental articles, that *whatsoever* is not read in the *holy scriptures*, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of *any man*, as an article of the faith; and the Apostle sets his hand to the truth of this doctrine.

But though I have thus far argued in favour of reason and understanding, in order to convince men of their usefulness in religion, yet we must still submit to be informed, enlightened, and determined by the *word* of God: and therefore, to the
serious

serious consideration of such as allow the Old and New Testament to be evidence in the case, I desire to propose the following texts, in order to determine *how*, and *in what sense*, according to *scripture*, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST are one ?

John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* This is a scripture mode of speech, which may be met with in many places in the New Testament, where *two* or *more* are said to be *one*; but not *so one*, as to be *one* in *substance* or *essence*. To prove this, I shall mention that text, Ephesians ii. 14. where Paul signified to the Ephesian converts, that notwithstanding they had not observed the Jewish circumcision, yet they were now in CHRIST upon the same foundation with the believing Jews; the words are, *For he is our peace, and hath made both ONE.* But, surely, no man will have the front to say, that such a number of Jewish and Gentile converts had but one *substance* or *essence amongst them all*: nothing could be more extravagant than such an imagination. But CHRIST hath made *both* ONE, by taking down the wall of partition, which had before kept the Jews and Gentiles at such a distance

distance, and so hath made them *ONE spiritual body or church*, in *unity* of faith, worship, privileges, &c. as it is in the 15th verse, making in himself, of twain, *ONE new man*; and in the 16th verse, reconciling *both* unto *GOD* in *ONE* body.

1 Corinthians III. 8. *For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Verse 5th, Who then is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed? And verse 6th, I have planted the gospel among you; Apollos watered, "he came afterwards and further instructed you in it"; but GOD gave the increase. Verse 7th, So then neither is he (Paul) that planteth, any thing; nor he (Apollos) that watereth, but GOD that giveth the increase. Verse 8th, Now he (Paul) that planteth, and he (Apollos) that watereth, are one. But how ONE? surely not one in substance or essence, as if both Paul and Apollos had but ONE substance or essence, in which both their persons subsisted; or as if both had but ONE soul, and but ONE body in which that one soul lived and acted, for that is impossible. How then were Paul and Apollos ONE? Evidently, as they had the same commission from the same Lord, as they agreed in the same work, preached the same gospel, and promoted the same*
end;

end; and in their labours among the Corinthians, they were both ONE, in opposition to those who would have separated them, and made them heads of different sects, as if they had differed in their doctrine. John xvii. 21. verse 20. *Neither pray I for these (my Apostles) alone, but for them also that shall believe on me through their word.* Verse 21. *That they may all be ONE, as thou, FATHER, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be ONE in us.* But, surely, our SAVIOUR never prayed, that all who should believe on him, through the Apostles' word, should be ONE in substance or essence; but he prayed that they might be ONE, as they were all united to him, and to one another, in the bonds of faith, holiness, and love, even as the FATHER and the SON are united in truth, love, and mutual concurrence.

John x. 27. 30. In the 27th verse it is said, *My sheep hear my voice, &c.* Verse 28. *And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hands, or frustrate the design of their salvation.* Verse 29th, *And were it possible my power should fail, my Father who gave them me is GREATER than ALL, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand: I and my Father are ONE.* What!

ONE

ONE in *substance* or *essence*? so that the FATHER and the SON, who are two distinct and different persons, or intelligent agents, as much as Paul and Apollos, have, notwithstanding, but ONE individual *substance* or *essence* betwixt them, in which they both subsist, live, and act! Thus do *learning* and *knowledge*, misapplied by *prejudice* and *prepossession*, darken and eclipse the *clearest light*.

I and my Father are ONE; that is, "my Father concurreth and acteth with me in the salvation of good men". *I came not of myself, but he sent me. I am not alone, because the Father is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him: I do nothing of myself.* John VIII. 28. our Saviour says, *I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

In these, and many other texts, our Saviour makes it undeniably plain, that he acted by *commission from the FATHER*, and that the Father's power would *concur* with him in executing all the high and glorious designs of redeeming love. And to confirm this beyond all doubt, we have the words of CHRIST himself, which expressly assert not only the *distinction* of the persons
of

of the FATHER and SON, but the *superiority* of the FATHER to the SON, in those remarkable words, John v. 19, 30. In the 19th verse he says, with a repeated and more than ordinary vehemency, lest his followers should ascribe the glory of his miracles and doctrine to himself, which belonged to the Father, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, (speaking unto the Jews,) the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, &c.* And in the 30th verse, *I can of my own self do nothing.* Here, as in many other instances, our Lord JESUS CHRIST ascribes the *supremacy* to GOD the FATHER, and expressly owns his *dependance* on him. And though the *Athanasian creed* asserts, that “the SON is equal to the FATHER, and that none of the three persons in the Trinity is greater or less than another”; yet CHRIST, in plain contradiction to this creed, affirms, that his FATHER is greater than he, John xiv. 28. And whether the *creed*, or JESUS CHRIST is the more creditable evidence, let every man judge for himself. But this is not all, for the *eighth article* of the church of England plainly affirms, that “the Athanasian creed may be proved by most certain warrants of holy scripture”; and gives that for the reason why it ought to be thoroughly received and believed; *thoroughly, that is, every part*

part of it; not as the Presbyterian parsons receive and subscribe it, who *own one part* of it, and *reject another*, but, according to the article, the orthodoxy of every part of it must be believed. And if we believe this creed in what is above instanced, I own it is beyond my capacity to reconcile it with the gospel of JESUS CHRIST: for by comparing all the texts together, it appears clearly, that when *two or more persons* are said to be ONE, the meaning is not, that they are ONE in *substance* or *essence*, but in *affection, agreement, work, and design*, as may be further instanced in Genesis II. 6. *The Lord said, behold the people is ONE*: but though some may suppose this text is foreign to our purpose, and cannot be applied to the *persons* in the *Trinity*, I must yet insist upon it, as a rule of interpretation, as is fully evident by our Saviour's own words, John XVII. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thy name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be ONE as WE are.* Verse 21. *That they ALL may be ONE, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be ONE in US, &c.* Verse 22, *And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be ONE, even as WE: the FATHER and the SON are ONE.* This infallibly shews, if HE be infallible, who is the way, the truth, and the life, that the FATHER and

and the SON are ONE, in the *same sense* as CHRISTIANS are ONE with CHRIST, and with *one another* ; not by *identity* or *sameness* of SUBSTANCE or ESSENCE, but of AFFECTION, AGREEMENT, and DESIGN. And now let every Christian seriously consider, whether he can reject this *interpretation*, without rejecting the *doctrine* and *authority* of CHRIST.

In all these quoted texts, the *very same manner of expression* is used, as in the 1 John v. 7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are ONE.* And thus these *three* are proved, by the fullest and the most undoubted evidence of scripture, to be one, though not in *substance* or *essence*, as if *all the three* were but ONE DIVINE BEING, but ONE in *agreement* and *design*, viz. "in bearing witness", for that is the particular work the text speaks of; to which Mr. CALVIN has fully assented in a comment upon this text, in which he says, "that there are three *distinct persons* "in the Trinity, is plain from scripture; "but then how are they ONE"? To which he answers, "IN CONSENT OF TESTIMONY", as I have elsewhere observed.* And it has
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* See Free Thoughts on the Doctrines and Duties of Religion, &c. page 54.

sometime been matter of wonder to me; that the disciples of Calvin should think themselves obliged to vindicate his opinions in some doctrines, not so well supported by both scripture and reason as this is, and yet dissent from his judgment here, where he has both scripture and reason fully on his side.

I observed in the 14th and 15th pages that every *property* which we attribute or ascribe to the DIVINE BEING, must be a property of *perfection*; and as we ascribe to the FATHER the property to be *unbegotten*, to the SON to be *begotten*, and to the HOLY GHOST to *proceed*, every one of the three persons *possesses* one property of *perfection* which the other two *want*; and, consequently, according to the scheme of the Trinitarians, no one of the three persons, nor all together, can possibly be the ONE TRUE GOD, who is, and must necessarily be, a Being of *absolute perfection*: for if, according to their scheme, the *three persons together* make the ONE TRUE GOD, then it will follow, that the *essence* of the ONE TRUE GOD is compounded of *perfections* and *defects*; seeing, according to them, that every person in the Trinity is *deficient* in one property of *perfection*, ascribed to the other two: but this is *inconsistent* with the

the *nature* of an ALL PERFECT GOD. Nay, it will further follow, according to this scheme of doctrine, that the *essence* of the ONE TRUE GOD must admit of *opposite* and *contradictory* principles and properties of *perfection*: for one person will be endowed with the property of being *unbegotten*, and another person with the opposite property of being *begotten*; one person will *proceed*, and the other two will *not proceed*: so that it will, at the same time, be *true* of the DIVINE ESSENCE, that it is *begotten* and *unbegotten*, that it *proceeds* and doth *not proceed*; which is an express contradiction, altogether inconsistent with the *all-perfect* nature of God, and evidently tending to promote atheism, and confirm infidels in their foolish notion, “ that there is no “ God”; as he must necessarily either be a Being of *absolute perfection*, or *no Being at all*.

And thus, in direct opposition to the judgment of the Athanasian creed-makers, in the fourth article of that creed, I hope I have made it fully evident, that we must either *confound* the *persons*, or *divide* the *substance*.

The advocates of the doctrine of a Trinity, or three persons in the Godhead; tell
us,

us, that every person in the Godhead is an intelligent substance, subsisting by itself, and really *distinguished* from the other two, by its own *incommunicable* and *peculiar* property; for otherwise, they would not be three persons, but one person. The *peculiar* properties of the three persons have been observed above; but those properties do not at all tend to prove “the three persons *co-equal*”.

And as it is of the utmost importance for every sincere worshipper to offer up supreme worship, *only* to the SUPREME GOD, and to be fully *satisfied* in his own mind, who it is that is the proper object of this worship; and as I have asserted before, that reason is very helpful in the discovery of a first cause, which is fully confirmed by Revelation; I shall consider in some other scripture evidence, whether our glorious Redeemer has *assumed to himself* the character of the SUPREME GOD; whether his Apostles or the Evangelists looked upon and worshipped him *as such*; whether they have not all along kept up a plain and evident *distinction* between the identity or sameness of the FATHER and the SON: and also whether our Saviour ever pretended to be *co-equal* with God the Father; and, consequently,

quently, whether, according to the eighth article of the church of England, the Athanasian creed may be proved by *most certain warrants* of Scripture.

How, and in what manner, the FATHER and the SON are one, I have, I think, sufficiently demonstrated: and that there is but ONE SUPREME GOD, to whom supreme worship is to be directed, both the light of nature, and the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, fully and abundantly testify: and therefore the next enquiry is, whether our Lord JESUS CHRIST, our glorious Redeemer, our kind and gracious Mediator and Intercessor, is that SUPREME GOD, yea, or no? In which enquiry I shall adhere to my BIBLE solely, without any regard to creeds, confessions, determinations of fathers and primitive christians, established opinions, or any systems of faith whatever: and I shall confine my illustrations solely, or at least generally, to the declarations which God the Father has made of himself; to those which JESUS CHRIST has made of himself; and lastly, to the testimony of the Apostles concerning both.

GOD says, Genesis xvii. 1. *I am the ALMIGHTY GOD; walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Genesis xxviii. 3. *And*
D GOD

GOD ALMIGHTY bleſs thee, &c. *Genesis xxxv. 11. And GOD ſaid unto him, I am GOD ALMIGHTY. Exodus vi. 3. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY. Revelations iv. 8. And the four beaſts had each of them ſix wings about him; --- and they reſt not day and night, ſaying, holy, holy, holy, Lord GOD ALMIGHTY, &c. Revelations xi. 17. We give thee thanks, O Lord GOD ALMIGHTY.* Now I would aſk whether ever **JESUS CHRIST** is, in the ſcripture, ſtiled **ALMIGHTY GOD**? That he is ſtiled **GOD**, is, I think, plain; but though this high *appellation* is given him, yet he himſelf evidently diſclaims it in the ſenſe of **SUPREMACY**, which it always bears when aſcribed to **GOD the FATHER**, to whom **CHRIST** acknowledges his *ſonſhip* and *inferiority*; as may be expreſſly proved from his *own mouth*, in ſeveral places of the New Teſtament: the Athanaſian creed makers, however, aſſert the *co-equality* of the **FATHER** and the **SON**, in words as expreſs, as our Saviour has aſſerted the *contrary*. *John x. 23. For when the Jews were about to ſtone him, for that he being a man, made himſelf a GOD; he answered them, Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, Ye are GODS? and argues upon that text thus; If he called them Gods,*
unto

unto whom the word of GOD came, and the
 scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him,
 whom the FATHER hath sanctified and sent
 into the world, thou blasphemest, because I
 said, I am the Son of GOD? As much as
 if he had said, " Pray observe your own
 " law: the judges, among your ancestors,
 " were appointed, by God's commission,
 " to their offices, and were expressly called
 " GODS, Exodus xxii. 28. Thou shalt not
 " revile the Gods, nor curse the Ruler of
 " thy people: and though I am a much more
 " eminent and honourable person than any of
 " those judges, who were called Gods, yet
 " I have not here assumed the title God,
 " but modestly only said I am the Son of
 " God; and, therefore, if ye will be go-
 " verned by your own law, which, surely,
 " you will, who are so much in love with it
 " as to think it cannot be broken, you have
 " no reason to stone me; for if magistrates
 " were called Gods, because commissioned
 " by God, why say ye of me whom the
 " FATHER hath both sanctified and sent, thou
 " blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of
 " GOD. And even if I had assumed the
 " title God, this would no more have pro-
 " ved that I pretended to be the SUPREME
 " GOD, than that the Ruler's were the su-
 " PREME GOD, because it is written in
 " your law, that they are Gods".

I would observe further, that our Saviour himself disclaims OMNIPOTENCE, which is an attribute *peculiar* to GOD the FATHER, as the SUPREME GOD: John v. 30. *I can, of mine own self, do nothing, &c.* John xiv. 28. *My Father is greater than I.* And, therefore, how the FATHER and the SON are *equal in power and glory*, according to the assembly of divines; or how they are *co-equal*, according to the makers of St. Athanasius's creed, compared with our SAVIOUR'S *own words*, is altogether inconceivable.

OMNISCIENCE is also an attribute of GOD the FATHER; and, by the scripture account, appears to be one of his *peculiar* attributes, which has not, *in any instance*, been communicated to the SON. Mark xiii. 32. *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the SON, BUT THE FATHER.* Our reverend clergy have endeavoured to make this text mean, that our Saviour was *ignorant* of the *day of judgment*, only as he was *man*: but as they allow that the *divine* and *human natures* were *united* in CHRIST, the result of their interpretation amounts only to this; “ that the divine and human nature constituted *one person* in our Saviour, “ and

“ and that, that one person *did*, and *did*
 “ *not* know the same thing at one and the
 “ same instant”; which great discovery
 destroys the *unity* of personality in our Sa-
 viour, and really tends to undermine one
 principal foundation of the christian religi-
 on, *in their sense of it*, which is, that JE-
 SUS CHRIST, the *Son* of GOD, is *equal* to
 GOD the *Father*, in this attribute of *omni-*
science. But that *one undivided* substance,
 or intelligent mind *should* and *should not*
 know the same thing, at *one* and the *same*
instant, is so palpable an absurdity, that
 such a forced interpretation of a gospel
 text can add no credit either to christiani-
 ty itself, or to the profound judgment of
 those learned divines who are the authors of
 it. The GRADATION in the last cited text
 is very remarkable: for, in the first place,
 the Evangelist excludes CHRIST as to his
human nature, by saying that “ *no man*
 “ *knows that day*”; and then he excludes
 the *next degree* of superior intelligent beings,
 by adding, that “ the *Angels*, which are in
 “ *heaven*, were *ignorant* of it”; and then
 rises still higher, that “ the *SON*”, even in
 his capacity of being *superior* to the *Angels*,
 “ *did not* know it”: so that nothing is more
 evident than that all other *persons*, even of
 the *Trinity itself*, are *excluded*, as well as
 all other Beings whatsoever, GOD the FA-

THER *only excepted*, if we may believe our Saviour's own words ; by which it is undeniably plain, that as the *knowledge* of that day was *limited* to the FATHER, whatever Being was *not* the FATHER, our Saviour himself *expressly affirms* was *ignorant* of that day. JESUS CHRIST, therefore, affirming himself to be *inferior* in knowledge to the FATHER, cannot be so *one* with the FATHER, as to be of the *same substance* or *essence* ; and, consequently, in contradiction to the direction of the Athanasian creed, we must either *confound* the persons, or *divide* the substance. In this text and some others of like import, our Saviour seems to give us a caution, lest the GREAT GOD, his FATHER, should be blasphemed, in our bestowing upon the SON those honours which the FATHER had *reserved* intirely to himself.

That GOD the FATHER is *distinguished* from the SON, as a person *superior*, our Saviour himself has put out of all reasonable doubt : and that the Apostles have concurred in the *same testimony*, may be fully manifested by their writings, which assert *only one* SUPREME BEING, or GOD, to whom all our worship is to be ultimately directed. I Corinthians VIII. 6. *But to us there is but one GOD, THE FATHER, of whom*
are

are all things, and we in him; and one LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by him. When our Saviour put this question, Matthew xvi. 15, 16. *But whom say ye that I am?* Simon Peter answered and said, *thou art Christ the Son of the living GOD.* And as John testified that *he* was not the CHRIST, so CHRIST and his Apostles all along testified that CHRIST was not the SUPREME GOD, but that he was sent by the FATHER: and a public appeal is made to the opinion of the hearers, whether he that *sendeth*, or he that is sent is greater; though St. Athanasius's creed affirms, that no one of the three persons is greater or less than another.

The apostle Paul, in the beginning of his epistles, distinguishes GOD the Father from our Lord JESUS CHRIST, by giving the title of GOD to the FATHER, and that of LORD to CHRIST, except in a few instances; and in those the *circumstances* in the description distinguish the persons, if possible, more effectually than the *terms* themselves, Hebrews i. 8. *But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom; therefore GOD, even THY GOD hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Heb. i. 2. By whom

he made the worlds, &c. 1 Corinthians xi. 3. But I would have you know, that the head of every man is CHRIST; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is GOD. 1 Corinthians xv. 27, 28. For HE hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that HE is excepted, which did put all things under him: and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the SON also be subject to HIM that did put all things under him, that GOD may be ALL IN ALL. Now, is there any thing more plain and clear, than that the SUPREME Being made that very person heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds? Hebrews i. 2. Is it not also the same person, that sits down at the right hand of GOD, that was made more excellent than the Angels? And is it not still the same person, whom he calls by the eminent appellation of God, and whose God hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows? Therefore I ask, when our Lord Jesus Christ was made heir of all things, did he not receive some dignity, some power, or some advantage at least, which he had not before? But it is impossible that the SUPREME GOD should receive any dignity, power, or advantage, which he had not before; for he is the same unchangeable Being

*Being from eternity to eternity : therefore
JESUS CHRIST is not the SUPREME GOD,*

But it is still asserted, that CHRIST is the SUPREME GOD ; and the scripture says, that CHRIST is the *first-born* of every creature : therefore, according to this scheme of doctrine, the SUPREME GOD is the *first-born* of every creature. Now, the Apostle says expressly, that there is but *one* GOD, and by *distinguishing* between the FATHER and the SON, plainly informs us *who* that one GOD is : 1 Corinthians VIII. 6. *But to us there is but one GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him ; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* And when our Saviour put that question to his disciples, Matthew XVI. 16. *whom do ye say that I am ? Simon Peter answered and said, thou art Christ the Son of the living GOD.*

Acts x. 38. *How GOD anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with Power ; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil ; for GOD was with him.* Here is a plain instance, that the power which our Saviour had, was *delegated* to him from GOD the Father ; for otherwise the Apostle ought to have expressed himself thus, “ JESUS CHRIST

“ CHRIST is the omnipotent God, has all
 “ power *originally in himself*, and does not
 “ derive it from any other Being *whatsoever*.”
 But this would give the lie to what our Sa-
 viour says of *himself*, “ that of *himself* he
 “ could do *nothing*”; and to other descrip-
 tions that are given of him in the New Tes-
 tament.

2 Peter i. 16, 17. *For we have not fol-
 lowed cunningly devised fables, when we made
 known unto you the power and coming of our
 Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of
 his majesty. For he received from GOD the
 FATHER honour and glory, &c.* Now, it
 is plain, that a Being of *infinite perfection*
 cannot receive any *additional honour and
 glory*; nor can *omnipotence* receive any *addi-
 tional power*; therefore JESUS CHRIST can-
 not be the SUPREME GOD. We only ascribe
honour and glory to GOD, as he is a Being al-
 ready *possessed of honour and glory*; he re-
 ceives neither honour nor glory from *us*,
 for he had both in an *infinite degree* before.

To us, *Christians*, the Apostle expressly
 says, *there is but ONE GOD*, even the Fa-
 ther; and, consequently, except JESUS
 CHRIST can be proved to be the FATHER,
 he cannot be proved to be the ONE SUPREME
 GOD. The same Apostle also assures us,
 there

there is ONE LORD, viz. JESUS CHRIST. With what face then can the advocates of the Athanasian creed tell us, that "the ETERNAL GOD", Christ, was *begotten?* or, that the *first-born* of every creature was not *created?* or, if our Saviour is the SUPREME GOD as they affirm, that the SUPREME GOD *died* to make satisfaction to the SUPREME GOD? that is, that the SUPREME GOD *died* to make satisfaction to *himself*.

Is it once supposable, that if the Apostles, Evangelists, and other disciples of our Lord had known him to be the SUPREME GOD, that they would not have *worshiped* and *adored* him *as such*, with that *supreme* reverence and devotion which they knew was justly his due?

And would it not have been the Apostles' duty to tell the people, whom they were employed to convert to the christian faith, "that the SUPREME GOD was come down from heaven to be born of a VIRGIN, and that JESUS CHRIST was this SUPREME GOD"?

But how absurd and incredible would the people, who were to be converted to a new doctrine, have thought such a story as this! "that while John was *baptizing* the SUPREME

"PREME GOD, the SUPREME GOD came
 "down from *heaven*, in the form of a
 "dove, and *sanctified* the SUPREME GOD"! This would not have been the most hopeful scheme of doctrine for the conversion of heathens and infidels to the christian faith, Nay the continuance of such doctrines in the church, must convince the enemies of Revelation that Christians cannot possibly be *sincere*; since they pretend to *believe* what is altogether *incredible*; and embrace, as *mysterious* articles of *faith*, such absurd and contradictory propositions as these; "that
 "the Son is *co-eternal* with the Father,
 "and yet that he was *begotten* by the Father;
 "that he is *equal* with the Father,
 "and yet *subordinate* to the Father; that
 "he is of one *substance* with the Father,
 "and yet a *distinct person* from the Father";
 "and that we are neither to *confound* the
 "*persons*, nor *divide* the *substance*:" and this system of absurdities and contradictions we must either "believe *thoroughly*, or *perish everlastingly*".

JESUS CHRIST confirmed the doctrine which he preached, by many incontestible miracles; and he has been very careful to acquaint us by *what power* he wrought those miracles. *Jesus*, a man *approved* by miracles which GOD did by him, Acts II.

22. And again; *The words that I speak unto you; I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwells in me, HE doth the works.* JOHN XVII. 3. *That they might know thee, the ONLY TRUE GOD; and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*

The texts which I have quoted, and many more to the same purpose, that might be produced, are so full and conclusive, that we must either reject the *testimony* of the GOSPEL, or disbelieve the *creed*. That the kind and compassionate condescension of JESUS CHRIST justly demands from us *the most grateful* returns of love, testified by a sincere obedience to the requirements of *his gospel*, I am as ready to own as any man: but still a proper *distinction* ought to be kept up in our minds, between the FATHER who *formed* the scheme of our Redemption, and the SON who, *to do the will of his Father*, undertook the *execution* of it; for if we pay that *worship, honour, and glory* to the SON, which the FATHER has *reserved* to *himself*, and which *of right* belongs to him as the SUPREME GOD; we so far deviate from that rule of duty which our Saviour has prescribed us, and may be, in this case, as guilty of *blasphemy* and *idolatry*, as the most *bigotted papist* and *idolater*. And yet

yet how many serious christians may be found who think they can never ascribe *honour enough* to the Redeemer! Their fear is, that they fall short of giving him that *glory* which is his *due*; even till they ascribe to him such properties of *perfection* as subsist only in the SUPREME GOD, even GOD THE FATHER; and offer up to him such acts of *devotion*, as GOD THE FATHER has reserved entirely to *himself*. Isaiah declares, in the name of GOD, *I am the first and the last; and besides me there is no GOD.*----- *Is there any GOD besides me? Yea, there is no GOD; I know not ANY.* And St. Paul, 1 Timothy II. 5. makes an express *distinction* between GOD the FATHER and our Lord JESUS CHRIST in those remarkable words; *For there is one GOD; and one Mediator between GOD and men, the man CHRIST JESUS.* Now the office of a *Mediator* is to be an instrument of reconciling parties at difference: but if our Saviour is the SUPREME GOD, then the supreme God is the *Mediator* between *himself* and *men*, which is such an express *contradiction* to the whole tenour of the *New Testament*, that if we believe it, we must disbelieve the *Evangelists*, the *Apostles*, yea and even CHRIST himself.

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The people of the establishment, who look upon every thing as *sacred* which the CHURCH enjoins, are not so much to be wondered at for their adherence to the articles of the Athanasian creed; as the *old Whigs*, who adopt the main purport of it, which is to prove the *co-equality* of GOD the FATHER, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and who, whenever they are closely persued in this argument, very gravely tell us, that the doctrine is a *mystery*, and ought not to be too narrowly pryed into. But, in opposition to this notion, I have always thought, that what was *revealed* in scripture was revealed for a subject of *contemplation*; and that it is the very essence of *popery*, and it has been all along the *policy* of the Romish church to persuade the people, that no man short of a *priest*, was able to *unfold* the *mysteries* of Religion.

But, surely, the PROTESTANT CAUSE stands in no need of *ignorance* to conceal its delusions; SACRED TRUTH *shines* more conspicuously the more it is *examined* and *enquired* into! And if I have made the *same distinction* between the FATHER and the SON, which the SCRIPTURE makes, it is no longer *such a mystery*, as the great doctors of
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the church have represented it ; who have all along made mysteries in religion, by obtruding *their own schemes* of doctrine, with respect to this as well as other points, till they have *perplexed* both *themselves*, and *all* who were so weak or foolish as to be *led by them* : and at last, to compleat the full *triumph* of their profound knowledge, they have left us in a *labyrinth* of *scholastic jargon*, and *inexplicable nonsense* ; and by pretending to open our eyes, and *unfold* a mystery, in which there is nothing mysterious but of their own making, they have involved *themselves* and their *unhappy followers* in *ÆGYPTIAN DARKNESS*, even with respect to such doctrines as the scripture had made intelligible to the *lowest capacities*, if they had been left in the plain terms in which they are delivered in the *NEW TESTAMENT* for the instruction of every *sincere disciple* of *JESUS CHRIST*. Indeed, upon a review of some of the works of those great men in the church, who have taken immense pains to *perplex* the doctrine of the *Trinity*, one can scarce avoid imagining, that they *loved* darkness *rather than* light ; nay, and, perhaps, for the *same reason* as the scripture assigns, why men do so.

I shall conclude all I have said with observing, that it is absolutely necessary for every
man

man, who worships at all, to endeavour seriously to *satisfy himself* in the PROPER OBJECT of his *worship*.

Upon the whole, I expect no less than to be stigmatized with the invidious names of *Arian*, *Heretic*, and *Blasphemer*: but as I have written this, and other tracts, with no other view but to promote the *glory* of GOD, and to vindicate his *attributes*, which I thought were *eclipsed*, nay even *destroyed* by some doctrines of a *long standing* in the church; I was, *therefore*, willing to *search the scriptures* for my own satisfaction: and if I have drawn any conclusion that is inconsistent with that *standard* of *truth* and *orthodoxy*, I shall be highly obliged to any one, who, by *scripture evidence*, will shew me my error in a candid and friendly manner. Till then.

As I am not satisfied, that *every part* of the ATHANASIAN CREED is sufficiently *warranted* by *scripture*, as the *eighth article* of the establishment declares it is; I must shelter myself under the kind indulgence of the *sixth article*, in which, according to her native tenderness, the CHURCH has also declared, that “ *whatsoever* is not
“ *read*

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" *read* in the HOLY SCRIPTURE, nor
" *may be proved* thereby, *is not to be re-*
" *quired* of ANY MAN, that it should be
" *believed* as an article of the FAITH".

F I N I S.
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